

Freedom to Roam? Use of Schoolyard Space in Primary Schools with New Arrivals Programs

Clemence Due

University of Adelaide, Australia

Damien Riggs

Flinders University, Australia

Abstract

This paper presents findings from research conducted in two primary schools in South Australia with New Arrivals Programs (NAPs). The paper considers findings derived from a content analysis of photo elicitation data and a thematic analysis of focus group data in order to elaborate some of the ways in which the uses of, and assumptions about, space and place within the schools negatively impact upon students in NAPs. Specifically, the findings suggest that students in NAPs photographed a less diverse range of school spaces than did students not in NAPs, and that in focus groups students not in NAPs were explicit in stating that they saw school spaces as territory to be claimed. Importantly, the findings suggest that students in NAPs wished that they could roam more freely within school spaces, were they able to do so. The paper concludes with suggestions that may assist schools with NAPs to ensure that school spaces better meet the needs of all students.

Keywords

Space, refugees, migration, schools, power, photo elicitation

Introduction

Australian politicians and media outlets frequently make recourse to an understanding of the nation as multicultural and inclusive; a place where everyone receives ‘a fair go’. Such claims, however, are made in the face of a range of events which would suggest that Australia is not as inclusive as is claimed. Examples of this include the 2005 Cronulla riots in which a large group of mostly white Australian youth set out to attack Lebanese Muslim Australians shouting slogans such as ‘we grew here you flew here’ (see Perera, 2007; Due & Riggs, 2008 for discussions of this event), and more recently a series of attacks on Indian students in Melbourne suburbs. Such instances of ongoing racism and xenophobia bring with them significant implications for all Australians, but most clearly they hold the potential to negatively impact upon those who are not identified as part the dominant (i.e., white, Australian born) group.

One of the groups perhaps most significantly at risk of being negatively impacted by the above mentioned tension between, on the one hand, claims to inclusivity and on the other enactments of violence, are those people who arrive in Australia as refugees. People entering Australia as refugees are particularly at risk due to the already difficult process of resettlement, including learning a new language, establishing themselves socially and financially, and dealing with potential mental health issues such as trauma (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2002). At present, Australia accepts approximately 13,000 people annually through its humanitarian visa programme, most of whom will be refugees (Department of Immigration and Citizenship Fact Sheet 60). Yet research (e.g. Dunn, Forrest,

Burnley & McDonald, 2004; Pedersen, 2006) suggests that when refugees arrive in Australia they are more likely to experience exclusion than inclusion in their new home, but are nonetheless expected to learn and adopt 'Australian values' before they are seen to belong (see Hage, 1998). In this sense, inclusion within Australian spaces is set on very specific terms determined by dominant group Australians, thus producing highly power-laden understandings of belonging, inclusivity and freedom of movement within space to which those positioned outside of this group are expected to conform (see Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Trudeau, 2006, for discussions of the way spaces in general are highly regulated by social norms and power relations).

This control over space is not only salient across society as a whole, but also at the level of children within Australia more specifically. Indeed, previous research suggests that the spaces in which children play represent important sites that contribute to children's social, cognitive and physical development (Malone & Tranter, 2003). For example, the spaces in which children play have the ability to change the ways in which children behave - such as by encouraging different forms of social interaction (Malone and Tranter), or by increasing physically active play (Dyment & Bell, 2007). Furthermore, children's spaces and children themselves are managed and supervised by adults who are keen to control, protect and socialise children in particular ways (for more on this see Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Malone & Tranter, 2003). This suggests that the study of the norms as they are passed on to children is a valuable area of research. However, and as Malone and Tranter (2003) point out, it is not only the case that norms are imposed upon children by adults: it is also the case that certain groups of children may impose norms or regulations of their own upon other groups of children.

One particular space that will contribute greatly to the lives and experiences of young people with a refugee background in Australia is that of the school (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2002; Christie & Sidhu, 2002). Indeed, research suggests that the education received by a young people with a refugee background, and the school into which they are placed, will have a significant impact on their sense of community belonging and overall adjustment to their new country (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2002). Yet despite the potentially positive role that schools may play in supporting refugee youth, and given the previously discussed literature surrounding the expectation placed upon refugees to adhere to norms in Australia, it is likely that the same expectations will be placed upon refugee children entering the school system in this country. Thus these expectations and norms are likely to have a significant –and most often negative – impact upon newly arrived children from refugee and migrant backgrounds and their use of the school space (see Thomas, 2009 for an example of research in this area). Thus, for marginalised students, the freedom to roam across school spaces or to resist authority (either from educators or from other students) may be significantly limited by existing racialised power structures. As such, there is a need for research which examines the educational experiences of young refugee children to determine how they 'fit in' to the school environment, and to investigate to what extent these children are able challenge the norms within that space to build areas in which they both are seen to belong, but are also able to create their own values and norms.

In this paper we outline findings from a project undertaken with two South Australian primary schools that provide a New Arrivals Program specifically targeted at refugee and migrant students. Specifically, we look at data collected through photo elicitation and focus groups with both NAP and non-NAP students. The paper considers coded visual data taken from student photographs in order to gain a broad image of patterns of school space use. This data is then placed alongside textual data taken from student focus groups in order to provide a context to the coded visual data, and to provide an image of the use of school space from the perspective of the students themselves. Importantly, we recognise that the two schools are relatively different in terms of the playground spaces they offer to students, and the demographics of their student bodies. As such, we treat them

as two individual case studies for the purpose of this paper in order to draw attention to their differences. Nonetheless, we signal here that our findings suggest relative homogeneity in terms of the use of space across the two schools (i.e., that there are differences in the use of school yard spaces between NAP and non-NAP students that are relatively similar across the two schools). We conclude by examining some of the possible reasons for why NAP and non-NAP students may not play together, by highlighting how this would appear to confirm our above suppositions about the relative degree to which differing groups of students are free to move in school spaces, and we conclude by offering suggestions as to ways in which these issues may be addressed by schools.

Method

Participants and Schools

Two schools were selected for this study by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) in South Australia. The schools are referred to here as Hills Primary School (HPS) and Plains Primary School (PPS). HPS had a total of 222 students at the time the research took place, with 75 NAP students spread across six NAP classes. As such, NAP students accounted for 34% of the student body at the school. Of the NAP students 29 (39%) were refugees, with the remainder identified as students who arrived with their family as part of a planned migration. HPS was rated as a category six school on the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) Index of Educational Disadvantage, where a category one school serves students from the most disadvantaged families, and category seven schools serve students from the least disadvantaged families.

PPS, in contrast, is a category 3 school. It has a larger number of students (294), but is situated on a smaller amount of land, with a smaller playground space. The school has around the same number of NAP students (70), spread over five different classes. As such, NAP students comprise around 24% of the student population. Of the NAP students enrolled in the school at the time the research took place, 18 were refugees (25%). Both schools had a diverse student population, with students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, meaning that in terms of numbers, white students were not in the numerical majority.

At each school, forty students (twenty NAP and twenty non-NAP students) were selected to participate in photo elicitation and focus group stages of the research, and informed consent was gained from these students' parents. The use of a translator was used where required to ensure that parents fully understood what was involved in their child's participation in the research. At HPS, forms were received back from twelve NAP students (6 boys and 6 girls) and thirteen non-NAP students (6 boys and 7 girls). One of the non-NAP boys was away on the day the focus groups were held, meaning that focus groups were held with 24 students. Students were evenly spread across year levels, with around four students from both NAP and non-NAP from each of the junior, middle and upper primary groups. At PPS, forms were received back from nineteen NAP students (8 boys and 11 girls) and eighteen non-NAP students (10 boys and 8 girls). One NAP boy and one NAP girl, and one non-NAP boy were away the day the focus groups were held, meaning that focus groups were held with 34 students. Again, students were evenly represented from all primary school year levels.

Data Collection

Ethics approval was granted for the project both by the University of Adelaide and the Department of Education and Children's Services. The first stage of the project involved ethnographic observations conducted by the first author focusing on the use of space by all students in both

schools. . Findings from this first stage of the project are reported elsewhere (Due & Riggs, *in press*), but in general they indicated that NAP and non-NAP students rarely played together, and that NAP students were often relegated to playing on the margins of the main schoolyard spaces.

The second stage of the research involved photo elicitation and focus groups held with small numbers of students from each school. These were held once the ethnographic observation stage of the research was complete and it was felt that the first author had built a rapport with staff and students at the two schools. NAP vice-principals at each school were asked to work with classroom teachers to identify a representative sample of NAP and non-NAP students from all year levels to participate in the photo elicitation and focus groups. These students were not randomly chosen due to the need for them to have the English language skills to be able to participate in focus groups. This meant that the NAP students participating in the research were those who had been in Australia, and at the school, for a longer period of time.

Once consent forms were returned to schools, the first author worked with NAP vice-principals to conduct the photo elicitation stage. Photo elicitation is a research method which involves incorporating a photograph into a focus group or interview, meaning that the discussion will be centred around the photographs taken by participants (Clark-Ibanez, 2004). As Darbyshire, MacDougall and Schiller (2005) suggest, this means that research involving children is able to be child-driven, and to revolve around issues identified by children through their photos as important to them. There is a body of previous research conducted with children (Darbyshire et.al., 2005; Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Newman, Woodcock and Dunham, 2006; Burke, 2005) which suggests that using photography together with other research methods adds an extra dimension and flexibility to research conducted with children.

In conjunction with the first author, each school had its own protocols for running the photo elicitation period. At HPS, photo elicitation was conducted over three different sessions, with NAP junior primary students, NAP middle and upper primary students, and non-NAP students taking their photos on separate occasions. At PPS, however, the photo elicitation was conducted on only one occasion. All photo-taking sessions were held at lunch time, meaning that students had around forty-five minutes at each school to take photos. Students were given a disposable, twelve-exposure camera and were given instructions for how to use it. All students were then told to take photos of things in the school which were important to them, and that these could be either people or spaces. They were told they did not have to take all twelve photos if they did not wish to.

Once the photos were developed, the first author conducted focus groups with students in order to discuss the photos that they took. These were held as soon as possible after the photo elicitation so that the photos were fresh in participants' minds. Again, the first author worked with the schools in order to ensure that focus groups were conducted in a manner deemed appropriate to the site. At each school, NAP and non-NAP focus groups were held separately and students were split into groups of junior, middle and upper primary school students. In general, these groups contained between four and six students from a similar year level. During these sessions, the first author began a general conversation by asking students to choose the photos they liked the most, and to think about why they took each photo. The first author then spoke individually to students, asking probe questions such as why the photo was taken and what students liked or disliked about it. As such, focus groups contained a mixture of both group discussion and individuals speaking about their photos to the first author. The focus groups were audio recorded, and the recordings were then transcribed for analysis.

Analytic Approach

Once developed, the photographs were sorted by the first author into groupings according to school, year level and class type (NAP or non-NAP). Each photo was then examined noting the location within the school of the image within the photo and the inclusion (or lack thereof) of people in the photo. Incidences of locations and content were then tallied with the findings of this content analysis presented in the following sections. We recognise of course that the codification of the images is contingent upon our interpretation of their contents, and that it reduces the complex meanings that students may have had for taking each photo to simply the components of the image. To counter this possible effect, the focus groups were used to cross-check with children the coding of photographs as either 'space' or 'people' photos, and to inform and enrich our coding by adding information such as what aspect of a space made that area of the school important to the student who took the photo. Furthermore, and as we discuss below, the findings from the content analysis and the students' discussion of space-use very closely mirror the findings from the ethnographic data, thus indicating the validity of coding the data in this way. Importantly, however, the findings presented here do more than simply mirror our previous findings. Rather, they present the voices of the students themselves in regard to their understanding of school spaces (both through their photographs and through their discussions of the photographs in the focus groups).

In addition to the content analysis, the transcribed focus group data was subjected to thematic analysis. This analysis identified two dominant themes in the data: one relating to friendship groups (reported in Riggs & Due, *in press*) and the other relating to use of space and movement within the schoolyard. The latter theme, as the focus of this paper, was always likely to be a key theme as the focus of the project overall was on space use. Nonetheless, and as outlined above in the data collection section, students were not informed of this overall focus and they were given relative free reign in taking photos and had complete choice over which photos they discussed in the focus groups and the aspect of each photo they spoke to the first author about. As such, the theme of space and movement may be considered both a product of the research focus, but also a product of the interests of the students themselves and their perspectives as students at each school.

Analysis

In the following two sections we outline individually the findings from each school, providing both findings from the content analysis and examples of the related themes by analysing selected extracts from the focus group data. Whilst only a small number of extracts are included (due to constrictions of space), these extracts are broadly indicative of the ways in which students who spoke about movement and space addressed these topics (which were addressed by the majority of students in the focus groups, both from NAP and non-NAP classes, albeit in different ways, as we discuss below).

Hills Primary School

Table 1 below shows the number of times NAP and non-NAP students photographed spaces without people in the shot, and the total number of shots taken per group. We include this data to demonstrate the prevalence at which all students took photos of spaces, and thus the potential significance of space to students as a group. Whilst as we note above, issues of space was a focus of the project, students were relatively free to focus on anything in the schoolyard that they liked or which meant something to them. That so many took photos of specific spaces may thus be considered of note.

Table 1. Number of times students at HPS photographed space only compared to all photos taken

Group	Total number of photos featuring spaces only	Total number of photos taken	Average percentage of photos featuring spaces per person
Junior Primary NAP	7	57	14.44%
Junior Primary non-NAP	22	56	45.69%
Middle/Upper Primary* NAP	17	72	24.83%
Middle/Upper Primary* non-NAP	15	79	27.68%

*Middle and Upper Primary students are combined in this table due to class distribution at HPS at the time the study was conducted, in which students from years 3,4,5, 6 and 7 were combined.

Importantly, not only was space a particular focus for many students across groups, but it was specific spaces that appeared to be important, as can be seen in Table 2:

Table 2. Number of photographs of space only at HPS according to class and location

	Non-NAP students	NAP students
Upper Primary Play Equipment	1	0
Lower Primary Play Equipment	1	4
Sandpit	1	1
Basketball Court	1	1
Netball Court	0	0
Main Oval	3	3
Second Oval	1	0
Courts near Sandpit	0	0
Activity Centre Stairs	3	0
Third Playground	4	3
TOTAL	15	12

From this table it can be seen that there are some areas that both NAP and non-NAP students took photos of, such as the third playground space (a newer playground area located at the back of the school) and the main oval. Similarly, the oval was a place that an equal number of NAP and non-NAP students photographed. Interestingly, all the NAP students who photographed the oval were girls, despite the fact that in the ethnographic observations the first author almost exclusively saw boys playing on the oval. In the focus groups however, boys (and especially NAP students) did mention the oval as an area in which they spent time playing sport. The fact that they did not photograph the area could be due to the fact that the ethnographic observations were held during summer when the oval was dry, whereas the photographs were completed at the beginning of winter when the ground was too wet to play on. Finally, it can be seen from the table that non-NAP students were more likely to photograph a range of areas across the yard (8 out of 10 of the main areas), whereas NAP students photographed fewer of these spaces (5 of the 10 main spaces). This type of wider roaming undertaken primarily by non-NAP students was also evident in the focus group data, where many non-NAP students (and no NAP students) spoke of playing across several areas:

Interviewer: ok and where else do you like to play?

PSNN1: the basketball courts or the oval

Interviewer: basketball courts or the oval?

HPSNN1: every part of the school!

The trend for non-NAP students to be more spread out across the yard was also confirmed by the number of other spaces (i.e., in addition to the main areas identified in Table 2) which non-NAP students photographed compared to those photographed by NAP students, as can be seen in Table 3:

Table 3. Incidence of other space only photo areas by class

	Non-NAP students	NAP students
Area along front of school near road	3	1
Paved area below netball courts	2	1
Canteen	2	0
Gym	2	0
Own classroom	2	3
Area out the front of the administration building	2	1
Own deck area	1	0
Hopscotch	0	1
TOTAL	14	7

Interestingly, the only two spaces more likely to be photographed by NAP students (in comparison to non-NAP students) were the student's own classroom and the hopscotch area (which is located immediately outside a NAP classroom). This confirms ethnographic observations which found that NAP students were more likely to play close to their classroom areas in comparison to non-NAP students. A discussion of this type of limited or restricted movement in space can be seen in the following extract from a focus group with NAP students:

Interviewer: do you normally play around this area?

HPSNN2: no

Interviewer: no – where do you normally play?

HPSNN2: *pauses*

Interviewer: can't remember? Do you play on the play equipment?

HPSNN2: sometimes

Interviewer: ok – and this photo is outside your classroom?

HPSNN2: yeah, that is where I play

Interviewer: so you play outside here?

HPSNN2: yeah

Here, whilst the student does respond ‘sometimes’ to the question about playing on the play equipment, he is clear in his statement that the photo he took of outside his classroom represents an area in which he plays. As we discuss in our conclusion, this relative restriction of NAP students to particular areas has implications both in relation to NAP students’ perceptions of inclusion within the school, and who the onus is placed upon for increasing inclusive practices.

Plains Primary School

Again, and as can be seen in Table 4, a significant number of photos were taken by students at PPS across both NAP and non-NAP classes of spaces only. We take this as suggesting, similar to at HPS, that the spaces in which they move are of considerable interest to the students at PPS.

Table 4. Number of times students at HPS photographed space only compared to all photos taken

Group	Total number of photos featuring spaces	Total number of photos taken	Average percentage of photos featuring spaces per person
Junior Primary NAP	14	48	29.06%
Junior Primary non-NAP	5	14	37.5%
Middle Primary NAP	9	62	16.31%
Middle Primary non-NAP	22	65	30.68%
Upper Primary NAP	23	59	32.07%
Upper Primary non-NAP	25	66	33.63%

Also, and like HPS, there were noticeable differences between *which* spaces NAP and non-NAP students took photos of, as highlighted in Table 5:

Table 5. Number of photographs of space only at HPS according to class and location

Space	Non-NAP students	NAP students
Oval	8	6
Basketball Courts	10	6
Shelter Shed	1	1
Gazebo	3	0
Netball courts	1	1
Upper Primary Play Equipment	4	3
Library	0	1

As can be seen, there are several areas that both NAP and non-NAP students photographed. Of the seventeen NAP and seventeen non-NAP students who took photos, approximately half of both groups photographed the oval and the basketball courts, and approximately a quarter of both groups photographed the play equipment. Whilst more non-NAP students photographed these areas than NAP students did, it is clear that these areas were also important to many NAP students. This reflects data from the earlier ethnographic observations, which saw NAP and non-NAP students playing in the same spaces more often at PPS than at HPS. Nonetheless, we also noted in the ethnographic observations that whilst NAP and non-NAP students at PPS did tend to more often play in the same areas, this did not result in them actually playing together. It should also be noted that PPS has a much smaller schoolyard than at HPS, which may be another reason why both groups of students are seen playing in the same spaces more often than at HPS. Furthermore,

despite observed (by the first author) and reported (by students in focus groups) higher levels of shared use of play spaces at PPS, this does not necessarily mean that students perceive shared areas as equally 'owned' by both NAP and non-NAP students. This is clearly exemplified in the following extract from a focus group with upper primary non-NAP students:

PPSNN1: well I usually hangout around the oval

Interviewer: like up the back of the oval

PPSNN1: yeah that's year 7 territory

PPSNN2: and year 6

PPSNN1: year 6-7 territory – we just sit there and are like – yeah – you know how there is like the oval here and all the year 6-7s hang out there

Interviewer: like up towards the back of the oval? Cos you don't have a set space where you get to hang out just 6-7s?

PPSNN1: no we just mark our territory

Interviewer: you mark your territory?

PPSNN2: yeah like pee on it

Interviewer: so what about NAP 6-7s do they hang out there?

PPSNN2: no they usually play handball or basketball or soccer

Interviewer: the boys do?

PPSNN2: yeah

Interviewer: what about the girls?

PPSNN2: they play skipping and stuff

Here the area is not only clearly marked as year 6-7 territory, but it is also exclusively non-NAP territory. The fact that the students refer to the area as though it is generally inhabited by year 6-7 students, and then go on and clarify in response to the interviewer that year 6-7 NAP students play elsewhere signals the fact that even if NAP students make use of an area also used by non-NAP students, the latter perceive the area as their own. Of course it could be argued that this is a behaviour that many children exhibit (i.e., the claiming of territory), but as we will argue in our conclusion, the claiming of space in this way has particular implications for NAP students. A photo taken by a non-NAP girl of this space can be seen in figure 1 below.

Figure 1



It was clear in the context of the research that this non-NAP student felt that this area was important to her, given the fact that she had exclusively photographed this space to the exclusion of all other areas. Combined with the extract above where she and other students talk about this area, it would appear likely that this is a space in the school yard she feels that she has 'ownership' of. Since school ovals are central to school spaces, this is significant in that it indicates a sense of belonging to the school itself, and an ability to exclude others (i.e., NAP students) from making claims to belonging in the same way.

There is also another important point related to the apparent shared use of some spaces indicated in Table 5, namely that whilst NAP students did appear to play more in the main areas at PPS than they did at HPS, they were also more likely to photograph areas at the periphery of the school, as can be seen in Table 6:

Table 6. Incidence of other space only photo areas by class

Space	Non-NAP students	NAP students
Area out the front of sports hall	1	0
Grass area behind UP equip	1	0
Canteen	2	0
Garden at front of school	0	1
Front office	0	2
Own classroom	0	3
Area around UP NAP classrooms	0	2
Grass area where LP equip used to be	0	1

As can be seen from this table, NAP students were more likely to photograph areas at the edges of the school than non-NAP students, including their own classroom and the areas in the yard outside their classroom. This suggests that while NAP students were more likely to play in the main spaces at PPS than at HPS (although slightly less so than non-NAP students), they were also more likely to still play around the outside of the yard. This is a different finding to that at HPS, where non-NAP students identified more spaces outside the main spaces than NAP students did (with the notable exception of areas around students' own classrooms). We would argue that this difference is explained by the different lay-outs of the school yards. Hills Primary School had a much larger play area, and NAP students tended to be confined to certain areas at this school, meaning that NAP students and non-NAP students were very divided in terms of where they played. In contrast, PPS had a much more compact play space and NAP students tended to play more at the peripheries of the school, as can be seen by the above tables. Both of these outcomes, however, suggest that NAP students are marginalised within the playground space and are potentially not able to 'own' it in the same way as their non-NAP peers. This is discussed further in the conclusion. In the final extract from the focus group data below, a NAP student from PPS talks about his play patterns:

Interviewer: You like that picture too? Why?

PPSNN3: because this is my mum's favourite tree!

Interviewer: oh it's your mum's favourite tree! Do you like the netball courts or not?

PPSNN3:.... umm... I don't go in there but I like the tree

Interviewer: so do you play in this area?

PPSNN3: no but I like this area

Interviewer: but you don't play there?

PPSNN3: no I don't

Interviewer: where do you play?

PPSNN3: I play on the grass *pauses* or sometimes *pauses* I like – I play in the library!

Interviewer: in the library! Ahh ok!

PPSNN3: and this is where I sit and eat and play

Interviewer: ahh this is your classroom just here? Just near the chairs?

PPSNN3: yeah

This extract is interesting not only for the account the student gives of playing in spaces outside of the main areas, but also that he appears to express a desire that this could be different, in his statement that he 'likes the area' near the tree. We take this as potentially indicating that NAP students may at times experience there play options curtailed by the ways in which spaces in the schoolyard are implicitly shaped by norms set by non-NAP students (such as in the example of 'marking territory' provided earlier). The photograph referred to at the start of the above extract, of the student's mother's favourite tree, can be seen below in figure 2

Figure 2



This photograph clearly differs from the one taken by the NAP student shown in figure 1. This second photo does not clearly denote a space, but instead is of a tree positioned between the playground area, the netball courts and the oval at PPS. The student stated that she took the photo because her mother liked the tree, which does not necessarily suggest that she felt that she belonged in the space *per se*. Such differences further reinforce the ways in which NAP and non-NAP students felt about school spaces, a point that we explore this in more detail in our discussion.

Discussion

The above analysis suggests that children at the two primary schools who were newly arrived in Australia move differently within the playground space compared to children who were born in Australia or had been in Australia for longer periods of time. As such, these two primary school spaces appeared to engender certain patterns of play that we would argue potentially privilege non-NAP students at the expense of students in the New Arrivals Program. This can be seen in the results of our study which indicate that NAP students took a less diverse range of photos of school spaces than did non-NAP students, and that they were less likely to report that they 'claimed' spaces as their own.

The fact that NAP students at both schools appeared to be restricted to certain areas within the school suggests that NAP students may not feel as 'at home' within the space as do non-NAP students. Not only is this indicated by the finding that they did not roam across the yard in the same way that non-NAP students did (as indicated by excerpts from the focus groups), but also by the fact that many NAP students took photos of spaces for reasons other than it was an area in which they played, such as that they liked a certain tree or the way the grass looked. This would indicate that the space itself was not necessarily the central motivation to taking particular photos for these newly arrived students, but instead that they found something which they liked and wished to

photograph. This is an important distinction to draw and was not found in non-NAP photos. Instead, non-NAP students frequently photographed a space because it was an area that they reported as one they liked to play in, and they often indicated in focus groups that they played in this area to the exclusion of other students.

We would further suggest that the fact that non-NAP students appeared to feel they had the authority to 'claim' certain spaces (as evidenced by student discussions of 'marking territory' outlined above) would potentially contribute to the lack of ability of NAP students to play in all areas in the schools, and would hinder NAP students themselves from feeling an equal authority within, and ownership of, the school yard. This aspect of the research findings is important as previous research has argued that students are attracted to places that they can claim as their own, and that such ownership may be critical for a student's sense of security (Malone & Tranter, 2003). Sense of security is arguably even more important for newly arrived refugee and migrant students and thus the inability of these students to claim spaces as their own in the schoolyard may have important repercussions on their sense of belonging in a new country. Ironically, however, the fact that NAP students played primarily in marginal areas appeared to be interpreted by other students as exclusive behaviour and an indication that NAP students were not interested in playing with them, as seen in the focus group excerpt quoted above from non-NAP students at PPS. As such, the onus for interaction between NAP and non-NAP students was effectively placed with NAP students rather than the non-NAP students who arguably held more power within the space (a practice we challenge in the following section).

Importantly, we would suggest that these differences in perceived ability to claim spaces (or to take photos of spaces *as spaces for play* rather than simply as specific objects of interest) persisted even when NAP students left the NAP and moved into a mainstream class.

For example, one student who had transitioned into a mainstream class was included in this study, and her photos were most similar to those of NAP students rather than her fellow non-NAP students, thus providing some support for this suggestion. Obviously we make this suggestion very tentatively as we do not have the data to support a more robust claim, but certainly this is an area at which future research could be directed. In the following and final section of this paper we elaborate some further avenues for research as well as making suggestions for schools with NAPs to ensure that students in NAP classes are better able to feel a sense of ownership within the school.

Suggestions for Schools

Firstly we feel it is important that schools work to ensure that students who are new to Australia to view the school space itself as a 'safe' space rather than this feeling being confined to the classroom and classroom areas in which a particular student is placed (as was indicated by the greater number of photographs taken by NAP students of spaces directly outside classrooms as compared to non-NAP students). We would suggest that this could be achieved by making sure that all students are viewed as equals in the yard regardless of how long they have been in Australia. For example, students at HPS told the first author that the year 6/7 deck was for non-NAP students only, and that NAP 6/7 students shared a different deck area with non-NAP 4/5 students. The year 6/7 deck was identified by teachers in conversations with the first author as being a prized area within the school which students looked forward to using throughout their time at the school. The fact that NAP students of the same age are unable to use such a space with so much importance attached to it further adds to any divisions already existing between NAP and non-NAP students, and also suggests that non-NAP students are able to hold a privileged position in the school which NAP students do not. This then appeared to inform students' perceptions of the school space, as was seen when non-NAP students talked about areas of the school being 'year 7 territory' but then clarified

that this did not include NAP year 7 students. As such, we would suggest that wherever possible such divisions between NAP and non-NAP students are removed and this could then have a flow-on effect to students' behaviour in the school yard. Future research may also examine whether or not NAP and non-NAP students report similar or different perceptions of territoriality as it pertains to inclusion, and explore whether or not the play practices of NAP and non-NAP students differ solely because of opportunity, or also because of differing play interests.

Interaction between students is another important area which schools could work on to ensure that NAP students are not disadvantaged within the school space. However, it is important to note that activities undertaken to promote NAP/non-NAP interaction must not solely require NAP students to initiate interactions, but rather that the school as a whole must examine the contexts in which interactions occurs and the ways in which these contexts may reinforce dominant group norms. For example, there was some debate in both school about the provision of prayer rooms (one of the schools in this study provided such a room whilst the other did not), and there was also discussion over what festivals and holidays are celebrated within the schools (i.e., Easter and Christmas being celebrated but not Ramadan or Eid). The priority accorded to dominant group traditions potentially functions to limit the ways in which NAP students perceive their ability to 'own' the school space in the same way as non-NAP (and more specifically, dominant group) students. Such ownership was seen in many non-NAP photos and focus group conversations, with non-NAP students photographing each other standing out the front of school signs, students photographing paved areas with their names engraved on them, and students stating that they played in the 'whole school'. NAP students rarely or never indicated they felt the same level of ownership of the space. Whilst the schools in this research did attempt to provide opportunities to for non-NAP students to develop a sense of ownership of the school (such as showing NAP student artwork in school administration buildings), more work in these areas could go a long way to ensuring that NAP students start to feel they own school spaces in the same way as non-NAP students. Future research may also explore the degree to which NAP students perceive particular school practices as contributing to or inhibiting their sense of ownership or belonging.

Studying students' sense of ownership of school spaces has important implications since, as we found, the different uses and understandings of space as seen in these primary schools has the ability to further entrench the marginalisation experienced by newly arrived migrant and refugee students. As such, we encourage recognition of the fact that school spaces are not neutral ones into which children come only to learn. Rather, they also function to reinforce power relations which already exist in the community. In many instances this means that children who have only recently arrived in Australia are further marginalised in school spaces, reflecting experiences which they and their families may also have in the broader community in which they live. This marginalisation and exclusion from the main school spaces means that NAP children are potentially not able to feel a similar sense of belonging to the school space as non-NAP children born in Australia are able to feel. As these students and their families already experience levels of marginalisation in the community it is important that school spaces are set up in such a way as to provide opportunities for NAP students to own the space on their own terms rather than only playing around the edges.

Reference list

Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Fact sheet 2 – Key facts in immigration* [online]. Available from: <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/02key.htm> [accessed 1 September 2009]

- Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Fact sheet 60 – Australia's refugee and humanitarian program* [online]. Available from: <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/factsheets/60refugee.htm> [accessed 1 September 2009]
- Blatchford, P., Blaines, E. and Pellegrini, A. (2003) The social context of school playground games: Sex and ethnic differences and changes over time after entry to junior school. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 21, 481-505.
- Burke, C. (2005) Play in focus: Children researching their own places and spaces for play. *Children Youth and Environments* 16 (1).
- Christie, P. & Sidhu, R. (2002) Responding to globalisation: Refugees and the challenges facing Australian schools. *Mots Pluriels* 21.
- Clark-Ibanez, M. (2004) Framing the social world with photo elicitation interviews. *American Behavioural Scientist* (47) 1507-1527.
- Darbyshire, P. MacDougall, C. and Schiller, W. (2005) Multiple methods in qualitative research with children: More insight or just more? *Qualitative Research* 5 (4) 417-436.
- Dunn, K.M., Forrest, J., Burnley, I. & McDonald, A. (2004) Constructing racism in Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 39 (4) 409-430.
- Due, C. and Riggs, D.W. (2008) 'We grew here you flew here': Claims to 'home' in the Cronulla Riots. *Colloquy* 16 210-228.
- Dyment, J.E. and Bell, A.C. (2007) Active by design: Promoting physical activity through school ground greening. *Children's Geographies* 5 (4) 463-477.
- Hage, G. (1998) *White nation: Fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society*. Annandale: Pluto Press.
- Holloway, S. & Valentine, G. (2000) Sociology and the new social studies of childhood. *Sociology* 34 763-783.
- Kia-Keating, M. & Ellis, B. (2002) Belonging and connection to school in resettlement: Young refugees, school belonging, and psychosocial adjustment. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 12 29.
- Kuriloff, P. & Reichert, M. (2003) Boys of class, boys of colour: Negotiating the academic and social geography of an elite independent school. *Journal of Social Issues* 59 (4) 751-769.
- Malone, K. & Tranter, P. (2003) Children's environmental learning and the use, design and management of schoolgrounds. *Children, Youth and Environments* 13 (2).
- Morrice, L. (2007) Lifelong learning and the social integration of refugees in the UK: the significance of social capital. *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 26 (2).
- Newman, M., Woodcock, A. & Dunham, P. (2006) 'Playtime in the borderlands': Children's representations of school, gender and bullying through photographs and interviews. *Children's Geographies* 4 (3) 289-302.
- Pedersen, A., Watt, S. & Hansen, S. (2006) The role of false beliefs in the community's and the federal government's attitudes towards Australian asylum seekers. *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 41 (1) 105-123.
- Perera, S. (2007) 'Aussie luck': The border politics of citizenship post Cronulla Beach. *ACRAWSA e journal* 3 (1).
- Riggs, D.W. & Due, C. (in press) Friendship, exclusion and power: A study of two South Australian schools with New Arrivals Programmes. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*.

- Thomas, M. (2009) The identity politics of school life: territoriality and the racial subjectivity of teen girls in L.A. *Children's Geographies* 7 (1) 7-19.
- Thomson, S. (2005) Territorialising the primary school playground: Deconstructing the geography of playtime. *Children's Geographies* 3 (1) 63-78.
- Trudeau, D. (2000) Politics of belonging in the construction of landscapes: Place-making, boundary-drawing and exclusion. *Cultural Geographies* 13 421-443.

Authors

Clemence Due submitted her PhD at the end of October 2010. She is a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Adelaide and her research interests lie in the area of refugee studies, particularly in relation to education and mental health.

Email: clemence.due@adelaide.edu.au

Dr Damien Riggs is a lecturer in social work at Flinders University. He is the author of over 100 publications in the fields of critical race and whiteness studies, gender and sexuality studies, and family studies, including *What about the Children! Masculinities, sexualities and hegemony* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010).

Email: damien.riggs@flinders.edu.au